Large number of visitors, renowned cooperation partners, flourishing project business:

Ars Electronica draws a successful balance sheet for 2023

(Linz, February 14, 2024) More than 250,000 visits to the Ars Electronica Center and the Ars Electronica Festival, six competitions with prize money of 232,850 euros and 6.131 submissions, 20 EU projects, long-term collaborations with the Louvre, Reina Sofia, Museo Nacional del Prado and the Salzburg Festival, customer orders from Toyota, Ricoh, Böhler, KEBA, ESA (a.o.) and the FOUNDING LAB with IT:U – 2023 was a productive and successful year for Ars Electronica.

"We have consolidated our position as a leading international networking platform for art, technology and society, established ourselves as a research institution, as an innovative service provider for globally active companies and we were able to bring students and teachers from more than 50 countries to Linz to inspire the design of IT:U", summarizes Gerfried Stocker, Artistic Director of Ars Electronica.

"The multitude of these activities is reflected in a pleasing economic balance sheet", adds Markus Jandl, Commercial Director of Ars Electronica. "We overcame the after-effects of the pandemic, defied high inflation and the difficult economic conditions and were able to achieve a net profit for the second year in a row after 2022. In 2023, Ars Electronica generated two thirds of its total revenues itself; the rest came from public funds used to fulfill public service tasks. Our thanks go in particular to the City of Linz, which, as the owner, has borne large parts of the inflation-related cost increases and thus secured the fulfillment of our public educational mission."

Ars Electronica at the pulse of time

"2023 was an extraordinary year. Almost overnight, ChatGPT made the whole world aware of what Ars Electronica has been tirelessly talking about for years. Its relevance, topicality and appeal attract tens of thousands of visitors to the museum and the festival year after year, prompting artists from all over the world to enter competitions and renowned institutions and global corporations to seek collaboration", says Klaus Luger, Mayor of the City of Linz and owner's representative, congratulating the 2023 balance sheet.

"Dealing with new technologies such as AI or virtual reality is the order of the day at Ars Electronica. Driving these forward with a wide variety of partners and making them meaningful for society is always a challenge. Ars Electronica has recorded visitor numbers on a scale that we have rarely seen in the entire history of the company! It's about

communicating our future technologies, and this is achieved through art and culture at the Ars Electronica Center in a playful and interactive way for all age groups. In particular, more school classes than hardly before take advantage of the guided tours through our Museum of the Future! Congratulations on the unique success in 2023!" says Doris Lang-Mayerhofer, City Councilor for Culture & Chair of Ars Electronica's Supervisory Board.

Big rush at the Museum of the Future

In November 2022, ChatGPT amazed the world; just six months later, the Ars Electronica Center had brought its exhibitions up to date. Under the motto *Compass reloaded! Navigating the Future*, the Museum of the Future invited visitors to explore generative AI systems in May 2023 and presented exhibits by artists and developers from Austria, Romania, Belgium and the USA.

The Deep Space 8K also repeatedly enjoyed great interest. Equipped with a further four laser projectors in time for the Ars Electronica Festival, the immersive space has since shone with exclusive masterpieces of art history, the 3D applications *LAST SUPPER INTERACTIVE* (Franz Fischnaller) and *Venice Revealed* (Grand Palais Immersif, Iconem, Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia).

The Ars Electronica Center continued its close collaboration with the University of Art and Design Linz with the Best Off and Time Out exhibition series. In 2023, works by media artists studying in Linz who experiment with sound, film, performances, programming and innovative interface technologies were presented.

The popularity of the museum program was reflected in the number of visitors: with 172.160 visitors – not counting participants in events – 2023 was one of the best-attended years in the history of the Ars Electronica Center. A particular success was recorded with regard to school classes: A total of 36,485 pupils in class groups visited the Ars Electronica Center in 2023; apart from the Capital of Culture year 2009, this is a new record in the history of the company.

Ars Electronica Festival: 575 events at 14 locations

From 6 to 10 September 2023, Linz once again became the hub of the international media art world: 1,542 artists, scientists, developers, designers and activists presented a total of 650 projects on 80,000 square meters in the former postal distribution center and at 13 other locations in the city center of Linz. 338 partners and sponsors made it possible to stage 575 events in just one festival week.

Highlights included the opening speech by Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia, the Big Concert Night with the Bruckner Orchestra Linz, double bassist Bára Gísladóttir and

Austrian rapper Def Ill and the *Uncanny Valley* performance by the German theater collective Rimini Protokoll. The three-day symposium, funded by the EU, focused on the festival theme "Who Owns the Truth?" and brought top international speakers to the stage, including researcher Nina Jankowicz and Taiwan's Digital Minister Audrey Tang, who TIME magazine lists as one of the "100 Most Influential People in AI".

The Festival Campus, organized in cooperation with the University of Arts Linz, was also very well received: 56 universities from all over the world, including Taipei National University of Arts, Universidad Austral de Chile, Shanghai Tech University and Berlin University of the Arts, were among the guests and contributed their perspectives to the program.

Ars Electronica Futurelab: Innovative projects for renowned partners

In 2023 alone, the Ars Electronica Futurelab worked on more than 60 projects for partner companies from all over the world.

In collaboration with the Salzburg Festival, for example, the virtual reality application *Faust VR* was created, which made Max Reinhardt's acclaimed original stage design for the "Faust" production (1933 to 1937) a virtual experience for the first time.

The *Future Teams* project was initiated with Ricoh, a Japanese company and leading global provider of digital office communication solutions, to research how different players, including robots and microorganisms, can interact and cooperate profitably in the future.

On behalf of the non-profit Kaiserschild Foundation, the Ars Electronica Futurelab developed *missimo: Your Mission Tomorrow*, a 100 square meter mobile STEM experience space for primary school children. To introduce children to AI, robotics and programming at an early age, the truck has been touring Austria since fall 2023, visiting elementary school in rural areas. A team from the Ars Electronica Center is responsible for operating the truck, also on behalf of the non-profit Kaiserschild Foundation.

The fact that the Futurelab makes a significant contribution to scientific practice in Linz was recognized in November 2023 with the Upper Austrian State Prize for Innovation: The globally unique didactic application *Cinematic Virtual Anatomy* by Ars Electronica Futurelab, Siemens Healthineers and the Johannes Kepler University Linz was awarded the jury prize "Business Model Innovation".

Long-term cooperation with innovators in Japan

In Japan, existing partnerships were consolidated and new ones initiated last year. The Art Thinking Forum in Tokyo was established with the influential media players Nikkei and Hakuhodo; Ars Electronica is involved in shaping the creative future of the metropolis in the form of the *Civic Creative Base Tokyo* (CCBT). With Toyota Coniq Alpha, the Ars Electronica Futuelab developed the *Data Art & Science* project, which combines data science and the immersive potential of deep space 8K.

Ars Electronica Export in Munich, Dubai and Taiwan

In 2023, Ars Electronica Export curated a total of nine exhibitions and artistic projects, realized 48 events in 26 countries and collaborated with 70 artists worldwide.

Catalyst Lab – The Making of Tomorrow is the title of the exhibition co-curated and co-produced by Ars Electronica Export at the European Patent Office in Munich, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the European Patent Convention in October 2023. In Dubai – in the middle of the bustling Alserkal Avenue – the event "From the Past We Love, to the Future We Need" was realized with Festival X, using media art to examine the complex reality between tradition and modernity in the United Arab Emirates and discuss it with experts. Ten hours away by plane, in Taoyuan City (Taiwan), the cooperation with the Taoyuan Art x Technology Festival was deepened and a subversive artistic attempt was made to give online reports on climate change more visibility.

Ars Electronica Solutions exceeds all expectations

Initiated in 2011, Ars Electronica Solutions sets itself ambitious goals year after year – and far exceeded them in 2023. The team successfully completed a total of 44 projects for 22 customers in nine different countries.

The team completed two major contracts for the European Space Agency ESA: the pavilion at the International Aerospace Exhibition in Paris and the further development of the ESA-ESRIN Center in Frascati near Rome. Ars Electronica Solutions also equipped Switzerland's largest public observatory (the *Space Eye* near Bern) with a new visitor center, implemented the opening show for the new Böhler stainless steel plant in Kapfenberg and designed the "KEBA-InnoSpace" in Linz.

In December, Ars Electronica Solutions then exported a Deep Space 8K to the West Bund Museum in Shanghai. It is the first 8K immersive experience space with large-scale projections, laser tracking and 3D animations of its kind in Asia and the third deep space export after the Cubo Negro in the Centro de Ciencias de Sinaloa (Mexico) and the

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multimedia hall in the DAS MORGEN hotel in Vitznau (Switzerland). Another Deep Space 8K will start operating in the Croatian capital Zagreb in 2024.

Future Thinking School conveys empowerment

"Future Studio" workshops for women who are returning to work after a break and workshop days for apprentices whose innovative spirit needs is to be awakened – the Ars Electronica Future Thinking School has significantly expanded its offering in 2023 and gained new partners in the AMS, the Federation of Austrian Industry and the Austrian Economic Chambers. In total, more than 100 lectures, workshops and interactive events were held last year.

FOUNDING LAB – Inspiration for a new university

With the IT:U, a new university is being established in Linz that will focus on digital transformation and live interdisciplinarity. The FOUNDING LAB, developed and implemented together with Ars Electronica, invited students and experts from all over the world to Linz to discuss the design of the new institute and to test interdisciplinary and project-based research.

75 students from 43 countries took part in a summer school (August 23 to September 13, 2023) and 21 renowned fellows took part in an expert forum (September 6 to 10, 2023). During the winter semester 2023/24, which has just ended, 25 students worked on their term papers and were supported by the same fellows.

EU projects as a driving force: More than 160 partners in Europe

In 2023, Ars Electronica was involved in a total of 20 EU-funded projects, three of which it led as coordinator, and collaborated with 164 European partner institutions from the fields of research, business, culture and education. The continuous implementation of the European Commission's S+T+ARTS Prize and the European Union's Citizen Science Prize are examples of the successful implementation of international networking projects. In 2024, the award-winning works will once again be presented in corresponding exhibitions at the Ars Electronica Festival.

Ars Electronica is also involved in research projects such as the *European Digital Deal*, a study between 13 research partners that is investigating the influence of new technologies on democratic processes, and *SHARESPACE*, coordinated by the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence.

The festival as a green event and energy efficiency at the head office

In September 2023, the Ars Electronica Festival was once again organized as a green event and thus aligned with the sustainability goals of the United Nations' Agenda 2030. At the same time, the efforts to reduce energy consumption at the Ars Electronica Center, which had already been initiated in 2022, were consistently pursued. Through a series of optimizations in daily exhibition operations and targeted investments in more energy-efficient hardware – including the new laser projectors in Deep Space 8K – electricity consumption was reduced by about half compared to 2019. While around 1.7 million kilowatt hours of electricity were used in 2019, only 873,000 kilowatt hours were consumed in 2023.

Bruckner Year 2024: An outlook

Ars Electronica is taking part in the Bruckner anniversary year with two specially developed interactive projects in cooperation with the Upper Austrian KulturEXPO Anton Bruckner 2024. In Deep Space 8K, the elaborate 3D visualization *Playing Anton* offers the opportunity to immerse yourself in Bruckner's work and experience the Bruckner Orchestra Linz with its conductor Markus Poschner in a completely new and interactive setting. *Being Anton* takes you back to the 19th century and the world of Anton Bruckner, characterized by technological leaps, social tensions and wars, by a spirit of optimism and doom. Visitors move through an interactive sound space and hear sounds of city life at the time, excerpts from newspaper articles and diaries, or Bruckner's music.

Playing Anton and *Being Anton* can be experienced at the Ars Electronica Center from February 1, 2024 until the end of the year.